UNITED NATIONS

# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
LIMITED

E/ECA/POP/2
29 September 1983

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Agenda Item 5
Second African Population Conference
(Organized in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities)

January 9 - 13, 1984

LC/NAIROBI

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN AFRICA AND FUTURE TRENDS*

CONTENTS


| | | PARAGRAPHS |
|---|---|---|
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 1 - 5 |
| II. | THE 1984 DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION | 6 - 33 |
| | (a) Total population size and structure | 9 - 12 |
| | (b) Levels, patterns, trends and determinants of fertility | 13 - 20 |
| | (c) Levels, patterns, trends and determinants of mortality | 21 - 26 |
| | (d) Internal migration and spatial distribution | 27 - 29 |
| | (e) International migration | 30 - 34 |
| III. | FUTURE TRENDS | 35 - 40 |
| IV. | OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 41 - 47 |


*For technical reasons, this paper was reproduced without formal editing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The objective of this paper is to examine the demographic situation in the African region as at mid 1984 as well as future trends up to 2004 in relation to the targets of population growth components as set by the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) with a view to recommending policies for influencing the future demographic trends in the region. The WPPA taken together with the four international symposia that preceded it and the five regional consultative conferences that followed it, gave a new importance and political sanction to population issues.

2. It will be recalled that in 1971, the annual rate of population growth in Africa, then estimated as 2.8 percent was at par with that of South Asia and Latin America. 1/ With the anticipated decline in mortality which was not being accompanied by any significant decline in fertility, the African rate of growth was expected to increase slowly, and according to the medium variant of the United Nations projections, the rate was expected to reach 3.0 percent at the end of the 1970/80 decade. The view at the time was that only in the decade of the 1990s would the anticipated fertility decline be larger than the mortality decline and the annual rate of growth would gradually fall back to a value of 2.8 percent by the end of the century. The inference was then made that if the assumptions of the projections turned out to be true, Africa would within a few years have the highest rate of growth among all the major areas of the world and would remain alone in that position from about 1980 onwards, perhaps well into the 21st century.

3. But according to the 1973 assessment of the world's population by the UN family, the total population of the 50 contemporary ECA member States was estimated at 366 million as at mid-1974 (Table 1), the associated annual growth rate for the 1970-75 period was 2.6 percent, 2/ the gross reproduction rate was 3.1, and life expectancy at birth was 43.5 (males), 46.6 (females). 3/ For Latin America, the corresponding growth rate, gross reproduction rate and life expectancy at birth were 2.7 percent, 2.6, 59.2 (males) and 63.7 (females) respectively; and, mean for all Asia 2.2 percent, 2.7, 52.6 (males) and 54.9 (females) respectively. Thus around mid 1974, African fertility and mortality levels were estimated as the highest relative to those of the other major developing regions. At the estimated annual population growth rate in the region around 1974, the African population had the potential of doubling its size every 26 to 32 years. This implied quite a high level of fertility and low life expectancy at birth, all of which impede the achievement of human welfare for the region as a whole.

1/ Report of the African Population Conference: Accra, Ghana, 9-18 December, 1971, (E/CN.14/POP/61).

2/ The difference between the growth rate for 1970/75 and that for 1971 reported at APC1 is due to differential assumptions concerning growth components during the 1973 and the preceding, population assessment by the UN family.

3/ World Population Prospects as assessed in 1973 (United Nations, New York, 1977; ST/ESA/SER.A/60, Annex Tables 28, 38, 41.

4. The WPPA urged countries in situations such as in Africa around 1974 to consider adopting population policies aimed at (i) achieving a low level of birth and death rates consistent with the goals of reducing the annual growth rate to about two percent by 1985; raising the life expectancy at birth to at least 50 years by 1985; and, lowering infant mortality rate to at most 120 per 1000 live births by 1985; (ii) eliminating the undesirable consequences of excessive rural-urban migration; (iii) facilitating voluntary international movements; and (iv) taking into account the implications of changing numbers and proportions of youth, working age groups and the aged when formulating development policies and programmes. However, the plan did not recommend any world-wide family size norm but recommended various measures for achieving these targets. 4/

5. The demographic situation as at mid 1984 is discussed in the next section. Thereafter, the future trends from 1984 to 2000 in the light of two paths of growth in the population growth components are examined. The last part of the paper suggests policies for influencing the future management of the regional population.

## II. THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION AS AT MID 1984

6. It is pertinent to review the attitude towards population which prevailed in the region during the 1974/84 decade as derived from two monitoring reports recommended by the WPPA of African government perceptions and policies on demographic trends and levels in relation to development. According to the results of the third UN Population Inquiry in this regard, by mid 1976, 50 percent of the then 48 ECA member States considered their observed national population increase as satisfactory; about 71 percent felt that their observed fertility level was adequate; about 94 percent of the states felt that their observed mortality level was unacceptable and should be reduced; 94 percent expressed dissatisfaction with the spatial distribution of their population; 83 percent felt that the volume of immigration into their countries was insignificant while 61 percent felt that the volume of emigration from their countries was also insignificant. 5/

---

4/ United Nations World Population Conference: Action taken at Bucharest, issued by the Centre for Economic and Social Information/OPI for the World Population Conference, November 1974.

5/ World Population trends and policies: 1977 Monitoring Report, Vol. II (United Nations, New York, 1979).

7. The situation did not change significantly as at the time of the fourth UN population inquiry by mid 1978. About 52 percent of the then 50 ECA member States considered their natural increase as adequate; 50 percent felt that the fertility level should be maintained; 96 percent felt that their mortality level was unacceptable; virtually all the States felt that the spatial distribution of their population was unacceptable; 84 percent felt that the volume of immigration into their country was insignificant while the corresponding proportion regarding emigration was 60 percent. 6/ Again the bulk (67 percent) of African governments expressed no concern at the prevailing population growth rate around 1978. In effect despite the general awareness of policies suggested by the WPPA for containing rapidly growing populations, the need to take appropriate steps was not considered a priority in the region during the 1970/80 decade.

8. Against the background of the perceptions of ECA member States towards population up to mid 1978 as thus reviewed, the 1984 demographic situation for the region as at mid 1984 presented here derives from the medium variant of the 1982 round of population assessment by the ECA Population Division in collaboration with the UN Population Division. Details of the exact assumptions, (medium variant) regarding base year total population as well as base year and future trends of fertility, mortality and migration are contained in a recent publication of the ECA Population Division. 7/

(a) Total Population size and structure

9. In Table 2, the total population estimated for 1984 from the medium variant of the said 1982 assessment together with the associated proportions 0-14, 6-11, 65+ and dependency ratios are presented for the ECA member States by subregions. The data show that the population would total about 500 million by mid-1984. Within the subregions, the size would vary considerably. In the North, the population would range from 3.4 million in Libya to 45.4 million in Egypt, in the West from 0.3 million in Cape Verde to 91.4 million in Nigeria; in the Central, from 0.1 million in Seychelles to 36.0 million in Ethiopia; in the South from 0.6 million in Swaziland to 1.5 million in Lesotho.

10. Besides the total population size, the data in Table 2 also show that, around 1984, the regional and subregional populations would still comprise 42-45 percent proportion of children under 15 years of age while barely 3 percent would be aged 65+ years. This would yield a dependency ratio in the range of 85-92 per 100 working population. In addition, the potential primary school age population (6-11) would constitute about one fifth of the total population.

---

6/ World Population trends and policies: 1979 Monitoring Report, Vol. II (United Nations, New York, 1980).

7/ For details of these assumptions see Demographic and related socio-economic data sheets for ECA member States (UNECA, 1982), pp. 159-173.

11. In Table 3, data are presented on the dependency ratio, and the population proportions 0-14, 6-11 and 65+ for the 5 least and 5 most populated ECA member States per subregion as at mid-1984. The data show that irrespective of size, the proportion of the population comprising children (under 15) would still be high and would range from about 38 in Sao Tome and Principe to 49 in Nigeria; the potential primary school population (6-11) would roughly average about one fifth of the total population; the proportion of old people (65+) would be less than 5 percent; and, the dependency ratio would range from 58 in Cape Verde to 106 in Nigeria.

12. In addition, the 1980-1985 annual population growth rate of 3 percent (Table 4) for the whole region, with little or no variation between the sub-regions, (as compared to 2.4 percent for Latin America and 1.2 - 2.2 percent for South-East Asia) 8/ substantiates the fact that the African regional population by 1985 would still be growing far in excess of the target of 2 percent set for the same date in the developing world by the WPPA. This is largely attributable to the fact that despite moderate declines in infant and childhood mortality in the region during the 1974/84 period, there is no significant corresponding decline in fertility.

13. The level of fertility in the region is still as high as observed for the 1970-75 period with no apparent tendency towards a decline as at 1980-1985. In this connection, there have been three attempts by the United Nations to document the levels, trends and conditions of fertility throughout the world for countries having requisite data of sufficiently reliable quality. 9/

14. Evidence from the first of these studies indicates that data on the crude birth rate (CBR) were available in only about 25 ECA member States. Quality apart, the estimates indicated that the mean crude birth rate for the Western subregion of Africa was 48 as against 47 in both East and Central Africa, 46 for the North, 41 for Southern Africa and 48 for all the 25 countries with estimates. The report of conditions and trends of world fertility in the second study indicated that the situation in the ECA member States had not changed much since the first study. The mean crude birth rate estimates from the second study were 48 (West), 47 (East), 46 (North), 44 (South), 42 (Central) and 46 for all the 39 countries with estimates. The third study focussed on fertility changes that occured during the 1965-71 period. Overall, the mean CBR estimates were 47 (West and North), 46 (East), 44 (Central), 42 (South) and 46 for all countries with estimates.

---

8/ Demographic indicators of countries: estimates and projections as assessed in 1980 (New York, 1982).

9/ Population Bulletin of the United Nations, No. 7 (United Nations Publication, Sales No. 64 XIII.2), pp. 15-41; Interim Report on Conditions and Trends of Fertility in the World, 1960-1965 (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.72.XIII.3), ST/SOA/SER.A/52; Levels and Trends of Fertility Throughout the World, 1950-1970, (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.77.XIII.2).

15. The general impression from the three studies by the United Nations is that despite the paucity of good quality data, there are two zones of high and low fertility in the region. The countries in the North, West and East have uniformly high fertility while those in the central parts have low fertility. In terms of subregional variations as at the mid-1970, the estimated CBR values from the various studies showed the greatest variation among the countries in Eastern Africa followed by the Central, West, North and South in that order. The same pattern prevails with minor deviations in the case of the total fertility rate (TFR) levels.

(b) Levels, patterns trends and determinants of fertility

16. The data in Table 4 also show that the gross reproduction rate estimated for the whole region as at the 1980/85 period based on the assumptions implicit in the 1982 assessment was about 3.0 with little or no variation between the subregions. However, within the subregions, the corresponding estimates indicate that in the North, the range was from 2.4 in Tunisia to 3.5 in Algeria; in the West from 1.3 in Cape Verde to 3.6 in Nigeria; in the Central, from 2.2 in Gabon to 3.3 in Angola; in the East, from 1.3 in Mauritius to 3.9 in Kenya; in the South, from 2.8 in Lesotho to 3.1 in Botswana. Thus, although the 1980/85 estimated average family size did not vary significantly between the subregions, there were marked county differences within the subregions.

17. Overall, it is observed that the trend of the over-all mean CBR estimates since the first of these three United Nations studies tends to suggest an apparent decline of fertility in the region. However, for the first study, the CBR estimates for a number of countries were based on the reverse-survival technique. Although, the latest estimates are more dependable, they cannot be used to indicate trends. In a few small-sized African states, there are signs that some reduction in fertility is taking place which, if strengthened by proper policies, could slow down the observed growth rates.

18. Based on the known levels of the crude birth rate, total fertility rate and gross reproduction rate, fertility has been identified as the critical factor affecting population growth in Africa. What appears uncertain is the set of factors affecting the apparent subregional variations in these levels. Past predictions of the causality of fertility variations by regions in the developing countries have tended to be based on a multiplicity of factors. In the particular case of Africa, these have included differences in traditional attitudes and behaviour with regard to marriage, sexual relations, childbirth, cultural and environmental factors affecting the incidence of sterility, sub-fecundity, pregnancy wastage, a life of hard labour, declining mortality, nomadism, the

incidence of marital instability, of venereal diseases and periodic absence of marriage partners. 10/

19. In all these first sets of studies, variations in the fertility of females distributed, according to selected variables, have been used to explain some of the African subregional fertility differences. However, little progress has been made towards firm predictions of their causality because the variables often used to explain individual differences do not operate in isolation but are closely interrelated and have to be carefully studied in a statistically coordinated analysis. Of the three major studies reported in the literature using the latter approach in studying the determinants of fertility declines in Africa, 11/ two are particularly relevant in the present context. The first of these by Tsiu and Bogue (1978) identifies decreasing infant mortality rate, percent population engaged in agriculture as well as increasing urbanization, per capita GNP, female school enrolment and family planning as the most important correlates of fertility declines in the African countries included in the study. The Second Study by Ekanem (1979) identified decreasing subsistent agriculture and infant mortality as well as increased literacy and urbanization (in that order) as correlates of fertility declines in the countries selected for the study.

20. Drawing from all three studies, a more recent study by the ECA Population Division using variables related to fertility declines concluded that although it is indeed difficult to select a priori socio-economic indicators of fertility declines, it appears that the variables shown to be consistently related to fertility declines in the ECA member States are reduced infant mortality, increased female education and labour force participation, availability of family planning services and possibly a more equitable income distribution. 12/

---

10/ For details see the studies by the UN Population Division (N.Y.) and ECA including UN Population Bulletin, No. 7 (ST/SOA/SER.N/7), N.Y., 1965, Interim report on conditions and trends of fertility in the World, 1960-65 (E.72.XIII.3), Levels and trends of fertility throughout the world, 1950-70 (E.77.XIII.2), "Levels and trends of fertility in Africa" (E/CN.14/POP/17), January 1979, "Fertility levels, patterns and differentials in Africa and their implications for economic and social development" United Nations ECA (1979), African Population Studies Series, No. 3, pp. 1-24.

11/ Mauldin W.P. and Berelson B., "Cross-cultural review of the effectiveness of family planning programmes", IUSSP Conference Proceedings (Mexico, 1977) Vol. 3, pp. 163-185, Ekanem I.I. "Prospects of fertility decline in subSaharan Africa", United Nations Population Studies, No. 67, Prospects of Population: Methodology and Assumptions (New York, 1979), ST/ESA/SER.A/67, Tsiu A.O. and Bogue D.J., "Declining world fertility: trends, causes and implications", Population Bulletin, vol. 33, October 1978.

12/ "Regression analysis of factors affecting spatial and subregional differential fertility in Africa" in Population Dynamics: fertility and mortality in Africa (UNECA, 1979), pp. 274-303.

(c) Levels, patterns, trends and determinants of mortality

21. The data in Table 4 also showed that the expectation of life at birth estimated for the whole region during the 1980/85 period was 49.8 (males) and 52.3 (females) with a marked difference between the North subregion and sub-Saharan African subregions. Within the subregions, the estimates reflected this differential between North and subSaharan Africa. In the North, the estimates ranged from 50.5 (males) in Sudan to 58.4 (males in Tunisia); the corresponding range for the females being 52.5 in Sudan to 60.7 in Tunisia. In Subsaharan Africa, the corresponding estimated male life expectancy at birth ranged from 39.5 in Ethiopia to 66.7 in Mauritius while the female estimates ranged from 42.5 in Ethiopia to 72.5 in Mauritius.

22. Estimates of infant mortality rate (IMR) for 1980/85 equally reflect the North/subSaharan African differences observed for the life expectancy at birth. In the North, the range of IMR was from 95 in Tunisia to 126 in Sudan. In sub-Saharan Africa, the corresponding range was from 57 in Cape Verde to 146 in Gambia for the West; from 114 in Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe, Cameroon and Zaire to 150 in Chad for the Central; from 64 in Seychelles to 154 in Ethiopia for the East; and, from 91 in Lesotho to 115 in Swaziland for the South. Thus based on the data situation in the whole region around 1984, the estimates of life expectancy at birth and IMR for the bulk (about 66 percent) of subSaharan African countries still fell short of the targets set for the same date by the WPPA. Virtually, all countries in the North African subregion met the set targets in this context.

23. As in the case of fertility, it is pertinent, as well, to note that the mortality data presented in Table 4 are estimates derived from the projections (1982 assessment). Accordingly, they reflect the assumptions underlying the projections. Data from the 1970 round of censuses were used in deriving the assumptions for the projections from which the mortality estimates for various countries in the region around 1984 were obtained. Thus, actual information on the observed subregional differentials in fertility levels around mid 1984 is not available.

24. Although data on mortality in the ECA member States are scanty, available evidence indicates that (i) Africa has the highest average mortality of the major regions of the world; and (ii) mortality rates have been falling in most countries of the region for most of the twentieth century. Opinion is however divided on the timing, the pattern and magnitude of this decline especially in countries south of the Sahara.

25. In Table 5, data based on census results are presented on estimates of the crude death rate, life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rate for 8 ECA member States based on preliminary findings from a recent study for two points in time (the 1960s and 1970s) by the ECA Population Division. Although inference regarding trends is better based on at least three points in time, the scanty data

for the 8 countries do suggest some modest declines both in infant and childhood mortality in some of the ECA member States. Even for some of these countries (eg. Gambia and Liberia) mortality appears to have increased. But this observation needs be taken cautiously since the quality of data as at both time periods could interact with the apparent trend.

26. Of the various studies aimed at identifying the correlates of mortality declines in the African region based on data for the mid 1970s, two by the ECA Population Division are particularly noteworthy. 13/ The first of these studies was aimed at investigating the effects of economic development on mortality in the African region. Among other things, the said study revealed that (i) the major socio-economic factors that are negatively related to the estimates of crude birth rate in the region are literacy, per capita income, percent males in non-agricultural jobs and urbanization (in that order); and, (ii) infant mortality is positively correlated with crude death rate. The second study was also aimed, among other things, at determining the correlates of estimates of crude death rate around 1975/80 and of infant mortality around 1975. The study revealed that with reduced infant mortality and increased literacy as well as per capita GNP in the course of socio-economic development of the ECA member States, the level of crude death rate in these states would decline; with infant mortality, a reduction in estimates of the crude death rate will considerably reduce its present high levels.

(d) Internal migration and spatial distribution

27. A high degree of population mobility is characteristic of countries in the African region. The typology of these internal movements is however rather complex. The major flows include rural-urban, urban-rural, urban-urban and rural-rural migration. 14/ By far, the rural-urban migration is in terms of effect on development, the most important of these internal movements as a population growth component.

28. As at 1984, the total urban population in the ECA member States was estimated at about 150 million (i.e. 30 percent of estimated total population of the member States) while about 94 million (i.e. 19 percent of estimated total population of member States) lived in concentrations of at least100,000

---

13/ For details of these studies see "Mortality differentials and their correlates in Africa", in Proceedings of WHO meeting on socio-economic determinants and consequences of mortality, Mexico City, 1979, pp. 208-233; "Population trends and policies in ECA member States: 1970-2000", in African Population Studies Series, No. 4, (UNECA, forthcoming).

14/ Gould, W.T.S., and Prothero, R.M. "Space and time in African population mobility", in people on the Move (Eds. Kosinski and Prothero, 1975).

population. 15/ When both of these proportions are compared to the corresponding estimates for 1974 (24 and 16 percent respectively), then the fact can be appreciated that rapid changes in the size and proportion of urban population in the ECA member States took place during the 1970/80 decade. Admittedly, there were marked subregional and national variations in both of these estimates. For instance, as at 1984, the proportions of urban population were 48 in the North subregion; 25 in the West; 38 in the Central; 19 in the East, and, 17 in the South (i.e. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland). The corresponding proportions of the population living in localities of at least 100,000 population were 25, 16, 20 and 10 percent in the North, West, Central and East subregions respectively. 16/

29. Given the changes in the size and proportion of urban population in the various ECA member States as observed around 1984, available statistics indicate that the region still exhibits an extremely uneven population distribution exemplified by large areas of low population density and small areas of high population density. 17/ By far, the most important of the population distribution problems in the ECA member States is the disproportionate concentration of the total urban population in one single metropolitan centre which is usually the capital city. 18/ This problem underlies not only the enclave nature of development and prosperity on the continent but also the pauperization of large areas of the countryside. The expectations of employment in these primate cities lead to a massive and continuing immigration to them of people who rarely have the requisite skills for urban employment, except in marginal occupations.

(e) International migration

30. Considerable international movements have been recorded in the region. However, available evidence indicates that the directions of these movements are better known than the numbers involved. 19/ In the North African subregion, it is noted that Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have been suppliers of large amounts of labour to Europe, mainly, France. Since the early 1970s, the trend changed, and currently large numbers of Tunisian workers are migrating to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Algerian workers are settling at home. Egyptian and Sudanese workers are also predominant among the migrant workers in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Other oil-rich Arab states in the Arabian peninsula have recently become attractions to the upper occupational sector of the Egyptian and Sudanese work forces.

---

15/ United Nations, Estimates and projections of urban, rural and city populations, 1950-2025: the 1980 assessment (New York, 1982), ST/ESA/SER.R/45, Tables 2 (p. 34) and 9 (p. 64).

16/ Due to the nature of the data, it is not possible to provide an estimate of the proportion for the 3 member States in the Southern subregion.

17/ Demographic Handbook for Africa, 1980 (UNECA, 1982), Table 4.

18/ For an outline of these problems, see "Migration, population distribution and development in Africa", Paper contributed by UNECA to the Expert Group on Population Distribution, Migration and Development (Hammamet, Tunisia, 21-25 March 1983).

19/ For details of this evidence see, "International migration in Africa", in African Population Studies Series, No. 4 (UNECA, forthcoming), pp. 1-84.

31. Unlike North Africa, it is noted that the characteristics of international migration are different in countries of subSaharan Africa. The West African subregion, for instance, is characterised by a greater degree of seasonal migration than is found elsewhere in the African continent. In terms of volume, available statistics identifies Upper Volta, Togo, Mauritania, Chad, Ghana, and Mali as the six most important emigration countries of the West African subregion and Ivory Coast, Gambia and Senegal as the three most important immigration countries.

32. The Southern subregion is characterized by short-term migration (about 6-18 months duration) of young males to the mines and industrial complexes of the Republic of South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. By far, the Republic of South Africa was the largest importer of migrant labour within the subregion until the early 1970s when a decline set in regarding the volume of labour immigration. The labour exporting countries include Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia.

33. With respect to the Eastern and Central subregions, the prevailing migration is of a longer duration usually of one to two years. Available census data indicate that there has been a greater degree of mobility among the populations of countries in the East African community relative to the other countries within the two subregions. Some of the countries had sizeable immigration of Asians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Following independence, there was a mass emigration of these Asians. These countries are also more of refugee depots than centres of labour emigration and/or immigration.

34. Political upheavals have added to the international movements in the region. Available statistics indicate that Africa appears to have the highest number of refugees and displaced persons in the world. 20/ In 1975, there were an estimated number of 1,148,000 African refugees in various countries of Africa. The numbers of these refugees are in a constant state of flux, for while certain groups are being repatriated, new political conflicts, springing up elsewhere, add to the totals. 21/ Most of the refugees are in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa with relatively few in West and North Africa. The volume of these refugees and countries of origin have significantly increased in recent years. UNHCR data on refugees show that the number of African refugees increased to over two million by the end of 1979. 22/

---

20/ World Population Trends and Policies: 1977 monitoring report (United Nations, 1979), Vol. 1, pp. 102-103.

21/ Ibid.

22/ UNHCR Office

## III. FUTURE TRENDS

35. The demographic situation as at mid 1984 presented in the second part of this analysis was based on the medium variant estimates and projections which allow for decline in fertility and mortality with a nil or negligible net flow of migration outside the region during the 1970/1980 period. However, if African governments perceptions and policies on demographic trends and levels for the 1970/80 decade are anything to go by, then the anticipated future declines in the fertility and mortality estimates of these states are unlikely to be realized in the next two decades unless the socio-economic changes as revealed by related studies reported in the previous section occur in each of these states. Therefore, if anything, the past trends in these growth components observed up to 1984 are likely to persist in the next two decades. Accordingly, the corresponding indicators presented in this part of the analysis for the years 1994 and 2004 are based on two scenarios. The bleak or historical scenario derives from the constant variant assumptions which basically represent a continuation into the future of the trends in the growth components observed for the region as at 1984 and is synonymous with an extrapolation of past trends in the growth components.

36. The constant variant projections of the demographic indicators are summarized in Table 6. On the basis of the estimated levels in fertility and mortality around 1984, the total population of the ECA member States will be about 680 million by the year 1994 and 922 million by the year 2004. The associated numbers of urban dwellers will be 253 and 414 million respectively, children (0-14), 314 and 430 million respectively.

37. The picture that emerges from the analysis of the perspective of the African region by the year 2004 under the historical trend scenario has to be taken seriously. Firstly, the potential population growth would have tremendous repercussions on the region's physical resources such as land and the essential social services - education, health, housing, nutrition, water, etc. The conditions in the urban centres would worsen with more shanty towns, more congested roads, and more delinquents. Against such a background, the political situation would inevitably be difficult. The very consequence of poverty resulting from anticipated increased unemployment would be social tensions and unrest which, in turn, would result in political instability. As a result, management systems, which are at the very core of a proper development that produces the necessary physical goods and services for the people, would be increasingly undermined. Further, the weak and fragile social political structure would mean highly unstable national structures vis-a-vis external powers and forces.

38. The foregoing brief analysis under the historical scenario examined some of the implications of a continuation of past demographic trends in the African region. The normative or development scenario which derives from a projection of the medium variant assumptions to 1994 and 2004 is intended to assess the prospects of a new and better demographic setting that will not bring about unsustainable pressures and tensions but will rather ensure the progress and prosperity of all African countries. As noted earlier, it has to be emphasized

that, given the young structure of the African population as at 1984, drastic structural changes in the demographic situation of the region cannot occur just within the next 10-20 years. Major changes in population take a long time. But a first step has always to be made and the result of the normative demographic scenario presented in Tables 7 and 8 should be seen as the necessary transition towards the desirable changes in Africa's population trends and patterns in the next two decades. Such changes, of course, include not only a more balanced expansion in the population but also, and perhaps more importantly, a better utilization of the population as a resource directed towards its ownself and its own development and welfare. The differences in magnitude between the medium and constant variants regarding the total population, urban population and population 0-14 (Table 8) for the years 1994 and 2004 testify to the desirability of the ECA member States pursuing policies aimed at effecting declines in their growth components in the years ahead.

39. Under the medium variant of the population projections, the population of the region could be maintained at a slightly slower annual growth rate of around 2.9 percent(1984-2004). At this slightly lower population growth rate as compared to that of 3.1 percent (1984-2004) projected on the basis of a continuation of recent historical trends, the region as a whole could probably ensure better welfare of its people especially if the economic performance can be put into a much higher growth gear as described in a recent ECA study. 23/ As regards, the structure of population, the medium-variant projections show that even with changes in the demographic trends in the next 20 years, the African population will still be one of the youngest in the world by the year 2004. The children in the 0-14 age group would represent about 43 percent of the entire population as compared to a projected 46 percent if present fertility and mortality rates continue. With improvements in the population structure, the burden on the active population will drop from the 97 per 100 persons in the historical trends scenario to about 86 dependents per 100 active persons in 2004.

40. The distribution of the population between the rural and urban population depends a lot on the distribution of opportunities for progress which attract people. Assuming that under the normative scenario, African Governments will pay the necessary attention to the rural sector in terms of provision of essential services and creation of productive and remunerative employment opportunities for the rural people, then, no doubt the rural - urban exodus will slow down. With such policies in mind, it is projected that the population distribution would reach a much better balance. The rural population would represent about 56.1 percent of the entire population, amounting to about 455 millions, while the urban population would total about 386 million by 2004.

---

23/ ECA and Africa's development: 1983-2008, a preliminary perspective study (Addis Ababa, 1983.)

## IV. OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

41. One of the major achievements of ECA since its inception in 1958 was the formulation and adoption of Africa's strategy for development in the 1970s. Among other things, the strategy called for the integration of African economies as a matter of priority, expansion of markets, the application of science and technology to development, and the follow-up and operational control of development plans after they had been launched. 24/ The Lagos Plan of Action whose cardinal principles were reiterated in the Addis Ababa Declaration of April 1983 suggests, inter alia, that appropriate machinery should be established where necessary to ensure the greater integration of population variables in development planning, bearing in mind the expected doubling of the regional population between 1975 and 2000 and the impact of this on economic planning and development. 25/ Operationally, this implies that African Governments should take positive action to enhance awareness of the interrelationship between population and socio-economic development, incorporate demographic data in socio-economic planning using population projections; review their population situations of trends periodically; make policies relevant to and consistent with their development goals; and conduct periodic research on the interrelationship between population and development.

42. The analysis indicate that if the trends in the population growth components observed for the member States in the region around the mid 1980s were to continue into the future (i.e. the bleak scenario), the resulting population size, composition, and distribution will generate more problems (eg. housing, education, employment) in terms of the ability of each member State to manage its future population within the framework of overall development planning than it would be otherwise if these member States were to design policies consistent with the development scenario. The evidence reviewed in the paper further indicates that the high growth rates and associated youthful age composition that characterized the regional demographic situation up to the mid 1970s have persisted through the mid 1980s with no apparent prosepects of a change in the next two decades. The following is a summary of some of the suggested policies and programmes which the ECA member States can implement in the hope of achieving the desired lower levels in their population growth components as implied by the development scenario discussed earlier in this paper. The suggested strategies cover the general areas of population and development policy, population growth components targets and goals, and population data collection and research. The specific suggestions on urbanization, migration, family planning and status of women are contained in other papers.

---

24/ See African Target, Vol. 8, No. 1, April 1979, p. 5.

25/ See Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy, A/S-11/14, Annex I, para. 348.

43. Concerning the two critical growth components, the studies reviewed in the second part of this analysis highlighted some of the determinants of declines in fertility and mortality for the ECA member States. Regarding fertility, the suggested determinants include reduced infant mortality, increased female education and labour force participation, availability of family planning services and a more equitable distribution of income. With mortality, increased literacy and per capita GNP as well as reduced infant mortality are stressed. Besides these determinants, ECOSOC in preparing for the forthcoming international population conference notes that the experience of countries where family planning is integrated with development planning shows that improvements in the status of women, better health care and availability of and accessibility to family planning services, reduced infant mortality, improved equity of resource distribution, and population education converge toproduce a decline in fertility - increasingly the objective of national population policies. 26/ If the ECA member States are to effect changes in the critical growth components consistent with the development scenario, then viable population policy for these member States should consider these factors but in terms of a mix which has the highest potential for improving the quality of life and thereby facilitating rapid social and economic development which is the ultimate objective.

44. Since the ultimate purpose of development is to provide increasing opportunities to all people for a better life, it is essential to bring about a more equitable distribution of income and wealth for promoting both social justice and efficiency of production; to raise substantially the level of employment; to achieve a greater degree of income security; to expand and improve education, health, nutrition, housing and social welfare facilities; and to safeguard the environment. These qualitative and structural changes in the society must go hand in hand with rapid economic growth and existing disparities (regional, sectoral and social) should be substantially reduced. These objectives are both determining factors as well as end results of development. In sum, to the extent that population variables influence development and are also influneced by them, the theme of this brief analysis is that population measures and programmes should be integrated into comprehensive social and economic plans and programmes which should be reflected in the goals, instrumentalities and organizations for planning in the ECA member States.

45. Above all, when designing a policy, a key consideration should be the goal specification; what rate of change in the population growth rate is anticipated during the plan interval; and, what are the expected levels in the growth components (fertility, mortality and migration) consistent with the over-all desired growth rate. Having specified the goal, the cost of such means must then be estimated in both human and material terms. It follows from this that a key desideratum of a more viable population policy should have built-in mechanisms for evaluation of performance to avoid wasteful expenditures on unproductive strategies.

---

26/ See International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Newsletter No. 18, (May - August, 1983), p. 41.

46. Besides, the development plans should integrate demographic variables if they are to achieve a better quality of life as implicit in the targets set by the WPPA. This observation points to some elements of a special programme of assistance by ECA. First and for the long term, these countries need special assistance to improve the quality of their demographic data. ECA can assist these countries along the lines of the African Census Programme which started in 1971. ECA, through the media of regional conference, has been emphasizing the need for African States to continue taking advantage of the United Nations Regional Institutes for Demographic Training and Research. This would increase the potential of nationals from these States in the long term to perform their population data collection duties. Both of these are long term goals.

47. In the short run, ECA has been assisting these countries in two ways. First, it has, on the basis of existing data, continued to undertake projections of the total population and related vital rates for African countries. Such projections are also accompanied with an analysis of the implication of the projected trends in the population as well as, suggestions for possible amelioration. One observation from such analysis is that more and more of the ECA member States have come to adopt family planning programmes. Although such programmes cannot by themselves solve population problems in the short run, these countries find them useful and desirable. They also believe that family planning programmes can lessen the demographic burden; reduce the time lag between social and economic change and lessen the felt need for induced abortion. A second form of short-term assistance which ECA has continued to be involved on a routine basis is the task of analysing the socio-economic correlates of population growth components for its member States. These correlates provide useful guides and inputs into the development plans of the countries concerned.

Table 1: Estimates of the total population, gross reproduction rate and life expectancy at birth, for ECA member States by subregions, 1974 (medium variant)

| Subregions a/ | Total population (000s) | GRR b/ | $e_0^\circ$ b/ | | Annual growth rate per cent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Male a/ | Female a/ | |
| North | 95 599 | 3.1 | 50.6 | 53.4 | 2.7 |
| West | 112 670 | 3.2 | 39.4 | 42.5 | 2.6 |
| Central | 44 337 | 2.9 | 40.3 | 43.5 | 2.3 |
| East | 111 070 | 3.2 | 42.2 | 45.4 | 2.7 |
| South | 2 259 | 3.0 c/ | 42.7 c/ | 45.9 c/ | 2.2 |

a/ See the list of constituent countries in Table 7

b/ Refers to 1970-1975

c/ Mean of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects as assessed in 1973. (New York, 1977).

Table 2: Estimates of the total population, proportions 0-14, 6-11, 65+ and dependency ratio for ECA member States by subregions, 1984 (medium variant)

| Subregions a/ | Total Population (000s) | Population proportions 0-14 | 6-11 | 65+ | Dependency burden |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North | 121 865 | 43 | 16 | 3 | 85 |
| West | 162 734 | 45 | 16 | 3 | 92 |
| Central | 60 351 | 42 | 15 | 4 | 85 |
| East | 151 769 | 45 | 16 | 3 | 92 |
| South | 3 028 | 45 | 17 | 3 | 92 |
| All ECA member States | 499 747 | 44 | 16 | 3 | 89 |

a/ See the list of constituent countries in Table 7

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.

Table 3: Estimated dependency ratio and population proportions in ages 0-14, 6-11 and 65+ in selected ECA member States, 1984

| Subregion/country | Dependency ratio | Population Proportion 0-14 | 6-11 | 65+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North | | | | |
| Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 95.2 | 46.5 | 17.3 | 2.3 |
| Egypt | 75.2 | 38.1 | 14.4 | 4.8 |
| West | | | | |
| Cape Verde | 58.3 | 32.9 | 13.0 | 3.9 |
| Nigeria | 105.6 | 49.2 | 17.8 | 2.2 |
| Central | | | | |
| Sao Tome & Principe | 74.0 | 37.8 | 14.1 | 4.8 |
| Zaire | 91.1 | 44.8 | 16.5 | 2.9 |
| East | | | | |
| Seychelles | 80.9 | | | |
| Ethiopia | 91.6 | 45.3 | 16.4 | 2.5 |
| South | | | | |
| Swaziland | 90.4 | 44.4 | 16.4 | 3.1 |
| Lesotho | 84.8 | 41.9 | 15.4 | 4.0 |

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.

Table 4: Estimates of annual growth rate, gross reproduction rate (GRR), infant mortality rate (IMR) and life expectancy at birth ($e_o^o$), for ECA member States by subregions, 1980/1985

| Subregions a/ | Annual Growth rate (%) | GRR | IMR (Total) | $e_o^o$ Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North | 2.8 | 3.1 | 105 | 55.6 | 58.2 |
| West | 3.2 | 3.1 | 119 | 46.1 | 49.5 |
| Central | 2.7 | 2.8 | 125 | 44.8 | 48.2 |
| East | 3.1 | 3.1 | 106 | 49.4 | 52.8 |
| South | 2.8 b/ | 3.0 b/ | 103 b/ | 49.2 b/ | 52.7 b/ |
| All ECA member States | 3.0 | 3.0 | 112 | 49.0 | 52.3 |

a/ See the list of constituent countries in Table 7.

b/ Mean for Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.

Table 5: Estimates of crude death rate, life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rate for selected ECA member States 1960s/1970s

| Country | Year of Census/ Survey | Crude death rate | | Life expectancy rate | | Infant Mortality rate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Gambia | 1962 | 22.3 | 21.9 | 41.3 | 42.0 | - | - |
| | 1973 | 28.8 | 22.9 | 34.7 | 40.8 | 224 | 200 |
| Ghana | 1960 | 25.3 | 22.1 | 38.2 | 42.0 | - | - |
| | 1970 | 23.4 | 21.7 | 40.1 | 42.5 | 162 | 167 |
| Liberia | 1962 | 23.5 | 21.9 | 39.8 | 42.0 | - | - |
| | 1973 | 26.3 | 24.6 | 36.9 | 41.8 | 125 | 107 |
| Sierra Leone | 1963 | 37.2 | 31.8 | 28.2 | 32.0 | - | - |
| | 1974 | 29.1 | 22.7 | 36.5 | 36.8 | 246 | 224 |
| Kenya | 1969 | 20.0 | 17.9 | 44.2 | 47.8 | 120 | 102 |
| | 1979 | 17.9 | 15.8 | 47.1 | 50.4 | 105 | 89 |
| Malawi | 1966 | 24.5 | 22.1 | 38.8 | 41.5 | - | - |
| | 1977 | 22.5 | 20.0 | 42.4 | 44.5 | 224 | 193 |
| United Republic of Tanzania | 1967 | 22.5 | 20.3 | 41.3 | 44.5 | 156 | 133 |
| | 1978 | 20.0 | 17.9 | 44.7 | 47.3 | 148 | 125 |
| Zambia | 1969 | 22.5 | 20.0 | 41.5 | 44.5 | 135 | 115 |
| | 1974 | 19.2 | 17.1 | 45.3 | 48.5 | 106 | 90 |

Source: "Mortality levels, patterns and trends in Africa: a comparative analysis for selected countries in Eastern and Western Africa", (UNECA, 1983).

Table 6: Selected demographic indicators for all ECA member States, 1994 and 2004 (constant variant scenario)

| Demographic indicators | 1994 | 2004 |
|---|---|---|
| Total population (000s) | 679 404 | 921 581 |
| Total urban population (000s) | 252 407 | 414 271 |
| Population aged 0-14 (000s) | 314 139 | 430 195 |
| Dependency ratio (%) | 97.0 | 97.0 |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1000 livebirths) | 100[a] | 100[b] |
| Life expectancy at birth (males) | 50.1[a] | 50.1[b] |
| Life expectancy at birth (females) | 50.1[a] | 50.1[b] |
| Average completed family size (TFR) | 6.3[a] | 6.3[b] |

[a] Refers to the 1990/1995 quinquennium

[b] Refers to the 2000/2005 quinquennium

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.

Table 7: Projected total population for ECA member States, 1984-2004 (Medium Variant)

| Subregion/Country | Total Population (000s) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1984 | 1994 | 2004 |
| NORTHERN | 121 865 | 159 283 | 205 136 |
| Algeria | 21 727 | 30 717 | 40 937 |
| Egypt | 45 395 | 55 479 | |
| Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | 3 420 | 4 066 | 6 628 |
| Morocco | 23 118 | 32 068 | 43 391 |
| Sudan | 21 018 | 28 077 | 37 014 |
| Tunisia | 7 187 | 8 876 | 10 430 |
| WESTERN | 162 734 | 224 440 | 301 708 |
| Benin | 4 022 | 5 570 | 7 681 |
| Cape Verde | 347 | 401 | 448 |
| Gambia | 668 | 883 | 1 169 |
| Ghana | 13 309 | 18 270 | 24 750 |
| Guinea | 5 584 | 7 420 | 8 578 |
| Guinea Bissau | 890 | 1 119 | 1 293 |
| Ivory Coast | 9 243 | 12 401 | 16 528 |
| Liberia | 2 109 | 2 854 | 3 770 |
| Mali | 7 633 | 9 757 | 12 314 |
| Mauritania | 1 838 | 2 518 | 3 458 |
| Niger | 5 309 | 7 507 | 9 519 |
| Nigeria | 91 408 | 129 953 | 179 227 |
| Senegal | 6 275 | 8 160 | 10 545 |
| Sierra Leone | 3 887 | 5 162 | 6 769 |
| Togo | 2 788 | 3 573 | 4 509 |
| Upper Volta | 6 924 | 8 892 | 11 150 |
| CENTRAL | 60 351 | 79 231 | 109 384 |
| Angola | 9 114 | 11 860 | 21 453 |
| Central A. Republic | 2 469 | 3 198 | 4 252 |
| Chad | 4 883 | 6 191 | 7 900 |
| Congo | 1 659 | 2 214 | 2 981 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 400 | 519 | 682 |
| Gabon | 584 | 687 | 815 |
| Sao Tome & Principe | 93 | 115 | 140 |
| United Republic of Cameroon | 9 422 | 12 200 | 15 611 |
| Zaire | 31 727 | 42 247 | 55 550 |

| Subregion/Country | Total population (000s) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1984 | 1994 | 2004 |
| EASTERN | 151 769 | 206 641 | 278 290 |
| Burundi | 4 520 | 5 799 | 7 465 |
| Comoros | 403 | 541 | 716 |
| Djibouti | 218 | 276 | 350 |
| Ethiopia | 35 996 | 47 296 | 60 487 |
| Kenya | 18 829 | 28 336 | 41 601 |
| Madagascar | 9 658 | 12 726 | 16 787 |
| Malawi | 6 767 | 9 304 | 12 612 |
| Mauritius | 1 027 | 1 180 | 1 323 |
| Mozambique | 13 913 | 18 762 | 25 218 |
| Rwanda | 5 721 | 7 796 | 10 514 |
| Seychelles | 73 | 95 | 122 |
| Somalia | 4 165 | 5 266 | 7 523 |
| Uganda | 14 635 | 20 363 | 27 803 |
| U.R. of Tanzania | 20 802 | 27 814 | 36 718 |
| Zambia | 6 589 | 9 215 | 12 700 |
| Zimbabwe | 8 453 | 11 672 | 16 351 |
| SOUTHERN | 3 028 | 3 984 | 5 131 |
| Botswana | 932 | 1 254 | 1 614 |
| Lesotho | 1 482 | 1 915 | 2 443 |
| Swaziland | 614 | 815 | 1 074 |
| All ECA member States | 499 747 | 673 579 | 899 649 |

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.

Table 8: Selected Demographic indicators for all ECA member States 1994 and 2004 (medium variant scenario)

| Demographic indicators | 1994 | 2004 | Diff. with CV 1994 | Diff. with CV 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total population (000s) | 673 579 | 899 649 | 5 825 | 21 932 |
| Total urban population (000s) | 250 033 | 394 946 | 2 374 | 19 325 |
| Population aged 0-14 (000s) | 304 323 | 385 500 | 9 816 | 44 695 |
| Dependency ratio (%) | 92.3 | 85.5 | - | - |
| Infant mortality rate (per 1000 livebirths) | 91.0[a] | 81.0[b] | - | - |
| Life expectancy at birth (males) | 53.9[a] | 58.2[c] | - | - |
| Life expectancy at birth (females) | 57.2[a] | 61.7[c] | - | - |
| Average completed family size (TFR) | 5.8[a] | 4.9[c] | - | - |

[a] Refers to the 1990/1995 quinquennium

[b] Refers to the 1995/2000 quinquennium

[c] Refers to the /2005 quinquennium

Note: CV refers to constant variant (Table 6).

Source: ECA Projections, 1982.